

The main obstructions or obscurations to liberation are what are called "afflictive obstructions." The root ignorance and all other delusions together with their seeds are afflictive obstructions, for they are the main obstructions or obstacles for achieving liberation.

Here liberation means the liberation from the root ignorance and thereby also the liberation from cyclic existence, from taking rebirth uncontrollably due to contaminated karma and delusions.

In general, there are two ways of categorizing truths of cessation. The first category is merely nominal, for only one of the two divisions is an actual truth of cessation. The two categories are:

1. Non-analytical cessation
2. Analytical cessation

### 1. Non-analytical cessation

Tibetan: མོ་མོར་བརྟགས་མིན་གྱི་འགོག་པ། - *So-sor dag min gyi gog-pa* (*So-sor dag* = individual analysis,

*min* = not, *gyi* = genitive, *gog-pa* = cessation)

A non-analytical cessation is merely temporary and therefore not an actual truth of cessation. An example for it is the temporary stopping of anger due to one of the conditions necessary for anger to arise, for instance, an annoying object, being absent. However, this cessation is reversible because when all the necessary conditions assemble anger will again become manifest.

Another example, for a non-analytical cessation is when Bodhisattvas, who have reached the forbearance level of the path of preparation, cease to take rebirth in the lower realms. This cessation of rebirth in the lower realms is a non-analytical cessation because it was not obtained on account of the wisdom directly realizing emptiness – a wisdom that is cultivated in dependence on analyzing the ultimate nature of phenomena. It was rather obtained because on the forbearance level of the path of preparation the conditions necessary for rebirth in the lower realms do not assemble anymore. Please note that here rebirth in the lower realms refers to rebirth caused by contaminated karma and delusions and not to rebirth caused by compassion.

Vasubhandu says in his *Abhidharmakosha (Treasury of Knowledge)*:

*That which constantly hinders production,  
The other cessation is the non-analytical.*

Further Gyalwa Genduen Drup, the first Dalai Lama, says in his *Clarifying the Path to Liberation*:

*That which constantly hinders the production of its object of negation and is other than an analytical cessation is a non-analytical cessation.*

Therefore, also temporary cessations of delusions such as anger, desire, arrogance, etc. due to the application of particular meditative techniques (meditation on patience, love, compassion, death and impermanence, rejoicing, selflessness, etc.) are instances of non-analytical cessations. Those cessations are merely temporary because their antidotes, meditation on patience, love, compassion, etc. can only reduce and stop delusions temporarily. As soon as those meditations are discontinued the delusions will gradually arise again. Thus, the only antidote that can overcome delusions together with their seeds and thus overcome them irreversibly is the wisdom that directly realizes emptiness.

Other examples for analytical cessations are the temporary absence of the delusions pertaining to the desire realm in the continuum of someone who has attained the first concentration of the form realm; the temporary absence of the delusions pertaining to the desire realms and the first concentration of the form realm in the continuum of someone who has attained the second concentration of the form realm; the absence of the delusions pertaining to the desire realm, the first concentration of the form realm, and the second concentration of the form realm in the continuum of someone who has attained the second concentration of the form realm, and so forth.

### 2. Analytical cessation

Tibetan: མོ་མོར་བརྟགས་འགོག་ - *So-sor dag gog* (*So-sor dag* = individual analysis, *gog* = cessation)

An analytical cessation is an actual truth of cessation, for it is the irreversible absence of obstructions obtained in dependence on the wisdom that directly realizes the emptiness of inherent existence.

This absence is irreversible because the obstructions will never return. Therefore, analytical cessations are compared to the state of a permanently locked door after a thief has been thrown out of a house. They are called *analytical* cessations because they can only be obtained by relying on the cultivation of the wisdom that directly realizes emptiness. This wisdom in turn depends on the prolonged *analysis* of the ultimate nature of reality. Non-analytical cessations, on the other hand, do not depend on an awareness that analyzes reality.

Another way of classifying truths of cessation is into:

- 1) Nirvana with remainder
- 2) Nirvana without remainder

### **1) Nirvana with remainder**

Tibetan: ལྷག་ཅེ་ལྷག་པ་ལྷག་པ་ - *Lhag che nyang-dae* (*Lhag* = remainder/residue, *che* = possess/have,

*nyang-dae* = Nirvana)

Nirvana with remainder refers to the Nirvana (liberation or truth of cessation) in the continuum of an Arhat who still possesses the contaminated form aggregate. Thus, it is a type of residual truth of cessation.

When Hinayana practitioners newly eliminate the afflictive obstructions and become Arhats their minds are completely purified from delusions.

However they still possess the physical body that is the result of contaminated karma and delusions. This is why the cessation of afflictive obstructions in their continua is called *Nirvana with remainder*.

Furthermore, even though these Arhats do not experience any mental suffering anymore, due to their contaminated physical bodies and as a result of non-virtuous karma accumulated before attaining liberation, they may still experience physical suffering.

Lama Tsongkhapa says in his ***Lam Rim Chenmo (Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment)***:

*All sufferings in the sense of painful feelings – including even the slightest suffering occurring in an Arhat's mind-stream – arise from previously accumulated non-virtuous karma.*

### **2) Nirvana without remainder**

Tibetan: ལྷག་མེ་ལྷག་པ་ལྷག་པ་ - *Lhag me nyang-de* (*me* = not having)

Nirvana without remainder refers to the Nirvana in the continuum of an Arhat who does not possess the contaminated physical aggregate anymore. This means that the lifespan of the physical aggregate in the continuum of the Arhat who obtained *Nirvana with remainder* is exhausted. In other words, first one attains the *Nirvana with remainder* and when the lifespan of the remaining contaminated physical aggregate comes to an end one attains the *Nirvana without remainder*. In both cases, Nirvana, i.e. the cessation of the afflictive obstructions, is the same. The difference is that first Nirvana is newly obtained within the container of the contaminated physical aggregates, and that then the Arhat dies, i.e. leaves behind the physical aggregate.

However, even though Arhats who obtain Nirvana without remainder do not have any physical aggregate anymore, they still possess the purified mental consciousness. With that mental consciousness they remain in a blissful state of mental absorption focused on the cessation of afflictive obstructions. They may indeed remain in that absorption for many eons, until eventually their meditative absorption weakens and they are inspired to generate great compassion and Bodhicitta in order to enter the Mahayana path.

Therefore, from the point of view of the Mahayana tradition, everyone will eventually enter the Mahayana path and become a fully enlightened Buddha.

